

As New York works to recover from the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, an unfortunate battle is brewing in Washington over how to provide the funding necessary to meet the federal government's disaster recovery obligations.

As I return to Washington for votes next week, I am going to do everything I can to ensure that New Yorkers, and all Americans affected by this storm, have the resources they need to repair their homes and get their businesses and farms up and running. I'm also going to fight to ensure that municipalities, already suffering from budget shortfalls, have the resources they need to repair vital infrastructure so that people can return to their normal routines as soon as possible.

It is important to realize, however, that this year alone at least 18 states have been directly affected by natural disasters, and now the President's Disaster Relief Fund is running dangerously low.

In the past, when similar shortfalls have occurred, Congress hasn't let politics get in the way of doing what's right and we shouldn't start now. But even though the President just signed into law over \$1 trillion in budget cuts, some have said they will block the funding needed for disaster recovery in New York unless funding for other federal programs, that they dislike for political reasons, is cut in exchange. This is politics at its worst, and unfortunately, New Yorkers are getting caught in the middle.

The greatness of America is in the ability of its citizens to pull together when disasters, natural or unnatural, strike. I am hopeful that we can set politics aside and live up to that idea. Those who elected us deserve nothing less.